United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council unanimously reaffirms that present status quo in Cyprus is not acceptable; urges all concerned to commit themselves to confidence-building measures.

+ Secretary-General's Special Representative in Angola, Margaret Anstee, meets with President of Angola and leader of UNITA; representatives of both sides to meet tomorrow for the first time since outbreak of fighting.

+ Despite distrust and polarization, implementation of peace process in El Salvador has advanced steadily and the obstacles have been overcome, says Secretary-General in report on El Salvador.

+ Relief convoys of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees blocked in two separate incidents in Bosnia Herzegovina; UNHCR Special Envoy expresses concern.

+ Pakistani officer with United Nations Operation in Somalia shot while travelling with two military observers; in stable condition and being evacuated to Niarobi for further treatment.

+ Secretary-General's Special Representative for Liberia to leave for Africa on Friday; to hold meetings in Bénin, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire en route to Liberia.

+ Electorial team of United Nations Transition Authority in Cambodia fired on by unknown assailants in Siem Reap Province; three people injured, one seriously; Secretary-General's Special Representative expresses shock at attack.

+ Chairman of Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions recommends that General Assembly appropriate $108 million for United Nations Operation in Somalia for period from 1 May to 30 April 1993.

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For information media—not an official record

The Security Council today unanimously reaffirmed its position that the present status quo in Cyprus was not acceptable and that an overall agreement in line with the set of ideas should be achieved without further delay. Noting that the recent joint meetings between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in Cyprus had not achieved their intended goal, "in particular because certain positions adopted by the Turkish Cypriot side were fundamentally at variance with the set of ideas", the Council called upon the Turkish Cypriot side to adopt positions "that are consistent with the set of ideas on those issues identified by the Secretary-General" in his report of 19 November.

The Council further urged "all concerned" to commit themselves to a number of confidence-building measures, such as: a significant reduction of the number of foreign troops in the Republic of Cyprus; promotion of people-to-people contact between the two communities, by reducing restrictions to the movement of persons across the Buffer Zone; and military cooperation by both sides with the United Nations Peace-keeping Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP), with a view to the extension of the unmanning agreement of 1989 to all areas of the United Nations-controlled Buffer Zone "where the two sides are in close proximity to each other".

The Council also requested the Secretary-General to follow up on the implementation of the confidence-building measures and to submit to it a full report after the conclusion of the joint meetings that will resume in March 1993.

Today's action by the Council follows a report by the Secretary-General containing his assessments of the recent face-to-face talks held at Headquarters from 28 October to 11 November between the two leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. In the document, he urged the adoption by both sides of "confidence-building measures" as a means to reducing the "deep crisis of confidence between the two sides".

The next round of meetings on Cyprus is scheduled for March 1993.

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The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Angola, Margaret Anstee, flew yesterday to Huambo to meet with Jonas Savimbi, President of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). Today she met with President Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola. These meetings form part of the efforts being made by the United Nations to mediate a political solution to the current crisis in that country, which risks plunging it into renewed civil war.

In a press release issued today at Headquarters, the Secretary-General's Spokesman also indicated that the immediate purposes of the talks were to consolidate the cease-fire which was brokered by the Secretary-General on 1 November, to encourage both parties to return to the negotiating table and to reach conclusions on the future role of the Organization on which the Secretary-General can then make recommendations to the Security Council.

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Miss Anstee reported that both meetings had been constructive and registered some positive moves forward, the most significant of which being the agreement for the representatives of the Government and of UNITA to meet tomorrow in the city of Namibe. In order to facilitate this face-to-face meeting - the first one since the fighting erupted on 31 October and 1 November - it was agreed that neither side would bring security personnel, indicated the press release.

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Despite a number of problems and despite the distrust and polarization that a fratricidal conflict creates, the implementation of the peace process in El Salvador has advanced steadily and the obstacles have been overcome, said Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in a report dated 23 November on the United Nations Observer Mission (ONUSAL) in El Salvador.

The impeccable observance of the cease-fire and the ability of the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) to engage in political activities in advance of its full legalization as a party "are an impressive demonstration of the will of both the Government and FMLN to consolidate peace in their country", also noted the Secretary-General.

However, he continued, both parties to the peace accords have been responsible for late and/or imperfect compliance with many of their commitments, including the most sensitive and important ones. The most serious threat to the process emerged when it became clear that the formal ending of the armed conflict could not be achieved by the programmed date of 31 October 1992, and that there were difficulties over the schedule for the purification of the Armed Forces, said Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The full and faithful implementation of the peace accords will continue to require flexibility and restraint on the part of the Government and FMLN, he stressed, expecially in the zones of former conflict, where the population has suffered from and often has been displaced by, military operations, and where tensions remain.

The Secretary-General noted that the successful completion of the peace process would also require continuing support from the international community both through the continued existence of ONUSAL and through the provision of voluntary contributions to support activities that the Government can not finance itself.

As regards ONUSAL, it was the Secretary-General's intention to submit to the Security Council at "appropriate intervals" his recommendations on the future activities and strength of the United Nations Observer Mission, taking into account progress made in implementing the peace process. For the present, it was his recommendation that the Council extend ONUSAL's mandate for a further period of six months, to 31 May 1993.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has expressed grave concern over the blocking of a relief convoy bound for the besieged town

of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia. Another convoy headed for Gorazde was stalled when an armored escort vehicle hit a landmine. No one was injured.

UNHCR's Special Envoy, José Maria Mendiluce, has described the blocking of the convoy as "an extremely serious development", adding that he had very recently received assurances that the Agency's convoy would be authorized to continue.

He said that UNHCR was gravely concerned that it was being prevented from carrying out its task of bringing food to thousands of people on the verge of starvation. UNHCR officials with the convoy were trying to reach senior authorities to continue the journey.

The convoy loaded with food for 80,000 people -- mainly Muslims -- was joined by two other UNHCR trucks, also packed with supplies for the Serb population in the town of Bratunac. The column was being escorted by United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) troops when it was stopped on the Bosnian side of the border with Serbia. An unknown Serbian colonel refused to allow the convoy any further.

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In Somalia earlier today shots were fired at a United Nations vehicle carrying two military observers, one from Finland and one from Zambia, and a Pakistani officer - all members of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). The officer, Major Saqlain, was hit in the shoulder, and was evacuated to the UNOSOM hospital. He was reported to be in stable condition and was being flown to Niarobi for further treatment.

The Spokesman for the Secretary-General said that he had been told the attack came from a lone gunman who emerged from a side street and began firing at the vehicle.

The United Nations, he said, was "in the process of lodging a strong protest" about the incident.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Liberia, Trevor Livingston Gordon-Somers of Jamaica, is scheduled to leave New York for Africa on Friday evening. En route to Liberia he will visit Bénin, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, to meet with leaders of the Economic Community of West African Stat es (ECOWAS).

In Benin, he will meet with President Soglo, who is the Chairman of ECOWAS. In Nigeria, he will meet with the Executive Secretary and in Côte d'Ivoire with the Chairman of ECOWAS's Committee of Five. From there he will travel to Liberia, but the date of his arrival there will depend on the outcome of the earlier meetings.

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An electoral team working with the United Nations Transition Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was fired on yesterday while travelling with a civilian police escort in the Siem Reap Province. Three people were injured, a Fijian and a Cambodian lightly, and a second Cambodian more seriously, with a bullet wound in his lower abdomen. They were taken to the Bangladesh Battalion camp for first aid and then were evacuated by helicopter to the UNTAC field hospital in Siem Reap. All were reported to be in stable condition.

The UNTAC Spokesman said that the assailants had not been identified. A team of military observers had immediately been sent to the area to investigate the incident and UNTAC had requested help from the four Cambodian factions in trying to identify the attackers.

The attack brought to 13 the number of UNTAC members injured as a result of hostile action. The Head of UNTAC, Yasushi Akashi, expressed shock at the attack on members of the electoral component, those who were at the front line and most at risk. According to the Chief Electoral Officer, Reginald Austin, the incident would not prevent the registration process from extending as far as possible. It merely underlined the need to act with caution, he said.

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The United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) would need just under $108 million to cover its costs from 1 May and up until the end of April 1993, the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) was told yesterday. The Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), supporting the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of UNOSOM, recommended that the General Assembly appropriate that sum.

The Secretary-General, in his report, had appealed to Member States for voluntary contributions to meet initial UNOSOM expenses pending the operations's formal endorsement by the General Assembly, as well as for "the emplacement and continuing operation of UNOSOM". He also outlined an operational plan for UNOSOM that provides for a Force headquarters at Mogadishu and for four zone headquarters in other centers.

The report said that the operation would be staffed by a 700-person logistics unit, including an engineer squadron and field hospital. It would have five infantry battalions to provide security for receipt and delivery of relief supplies. The cease-fire in Mogadishu would be monitored by 50 military observers and some 480 civilian personnel to be recruited both internationally and locally.

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